

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A telecommunications system having a radio access network comprising:
2 plural control nodes;
3 inter-control node links for connecting the plural control nodes;
4 a handover selection unit which makes a selection regarding which of plural
5 connections handled by the radio access network should have control thereof moved
6 from a first control node to another of the plural control nodes to alleviate congestion on
7 an overloaded one of the inter-control node links, the selection including a
8 determination of a cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded link.

1 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the cost for each of the connections carried by
2 the overloaded link depends on (1) a number of inter-control links involved in the
3 connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 3. The system of claim 1, wherein the cost for each of the connections carried
2 by the overloaded link is a product of a number of inter-control links involved in the
3 connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit is situated at one
2 of the plural control nodes.

1 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit is situated at core
2 network node.

1 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the selection includes a determination of a
2 most costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
4 connection for handover.

1 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the handover selection unit further
2 determines a target one of the plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate
3 connection can be handed over, the target control node being a control node involved in
4 the candidate connection which is farthest from the first control node.

1 8. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit makes the
2 selection when an attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection
3 to the radio access network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate
4 connection to the target control node is unacceptable to the network, the handover
5 selection unit decreases a number of the inter-control node links which can be utilized
6 by the new connection or new leg of the connection before reattempting its selection.

1 9. A method of operating telecommunications system having a radio access
2 network, the radio access network having plural control nodes and inter-control node
3 links for connecting the plural control nodes, wherein the method comprises selecting
4 which of plural connections handled by the radio access network should have control
5 thereof moved from a first control node to another of the plural control nodes to
6 alleviate congestion on an overloaded one of the inter-control node links, the selecting
7 including a determining a cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded
8 link.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising determining the cost for each of
2 the connections carried by the overloaded link as a function of (1) a number of inter-
3 control links involved in the connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth
4 required by the connection .

1 11. The method of claim 9, determining the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link by multiplying a number of inter-control links involved
3 in the connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the selecting includes determining a most
2 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
4 connection for handover.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining a target one of the
2 plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate connection can be handed
3 over, the target control node being a control node involved in the candidate connection
4 which is farthest from the first control node.

1 14. The method of claim 9, wherein the selecting step is performed when an
2 attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection to the radio access
3 network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate connection to the
4 target control node is unacceptable to the network, a number of the inter-control node
5 links which can be utilized by the new connection or new leg of the connection is
6 decreased before reattempting the selecting step.

1 15. A handover selection function which makes a selection regarding which of
2 plural connections handled by the radio access network should have control thereof
3 moved from a first control node to another of plural control nodes of a radio access
4 network to alleviate congestion on an overloaded one of inter-control node links
5 connecting the plural control nodes, the selection including making a determination of a
6 cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded link.

1 16. The function of claim 15, wherein the function is performed at one of the
2 plural control nodes of the radio access network..

1 17. The function of claim 15, wherein the function is performed at a core
2 network node.

1 18. The function of claim 15, wherein the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link depends on (1) a number of inter-control links involved
3 in the connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection .

1 19. The function of claim 15, wherein the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link is a product of a number of inter-control links involved in
3 the connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 20. The function of claim 15, wherein the selection includes a determination of a
2 most costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
4 connection for handover.

1 21. The function of claim 20, wherein the handover selection function further
2 determines a target one of the plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate

connection can be handed over, the target control node being a control node involved in the candidate connection which is farthest from the first control node.

22. The function of claim 15, wherein the handover selection function makes the selection when an attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection to the radio access network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate connection to the target control node is unacceptable to the network, the handover selection function decreases a number of the inter-control node links which can be utilized by the new connection or new leg of the connection before reattempting its selection.